

WORLD ISLAND

Washed at its edges by more than seven seas, this World Island is the planet's largest land agglomeration. Since the dawn of his day, man's fate has been shaped on the compact mass of these three continents. It is here that this war, too, will be fought and won. An Englishman, Sir Halford Mackinder, knew it almost a quarter-century ago when Americans thought that they had just acquired eternal peace; and he said it in twenty-three words: "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland. Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island. Who rules the World Island commands the world." A German, the fabulous General Haushofer, inflated the British notion of continental challenge to the oceanic empire into a grand strategy of world conquest: Who rules the seas shall be beaten by him who, by ruse and by force, commands the land masses of the World Island. But once American Expeditionary Forces struck along the World Island's exposed artery—the Mediterranean canal—the basic geopolitical map of the world began to look like the road map for the United Nations' drive toward victory.

GEOPOLITICS OF 1942

The Heartland (see Mercator map below) was defined by Mackinder as the vast central and northern part of Asia that drains either to the essentially non-navigable Arctic or has no drainage to the sea; plus the Black Sea and Baltic drainage basins. It is the only area on the globe beyond the grip of sea and even air power. Politically, the key to the impregnable Heartland is, and always has been, an alliance with Russia. With Russia on the side of the oceanic powers, the world is fortified against a global earthquake of megalomania. With Russia on the side of the conspiracy, the World Island would become fortified against opposition from the fringes. And there are two ways for Germany to get the Russian key to the Heartland—through treaty or through conquest. Both ways were tried. Both failed.

There was a substitute for the original Heart-land concept: to dislocate the World Island's center of gravity from the northern to the southern part of Asia. Throughout 1942, this deadly danger to the United Nations was the conjunction of German and Japanese forces in India. It was averted by the British Army of the Nile, and by the U.S. combined forces in the Pacific.

Russian valor, British stubbornness, Chinese endurance, and growing American strength have created the decisive fact of this war: The world is one—but the World Island is not. While Germany and Japan fight two wars, the United Nations fight one.

GEOGRAPHY OF 1943

The World Island will give way at its seams. One — the Mediterranean — has been forced wide open. The sea power that the Heartland strategists sought to push beyond the fringes, and into oblivion, has now penetrated into what could be called the Brainland—continental Europe. Land power, along the Russian seam and in China, has checked the enemy's expansion. Air power is softening his productive strength and his resistance. Sea, land, and air power combined will finally break him. The same geography that only yesterday seemed mysteriously allied with the Axis has begun to work for us. The Geopoliticians' mistake was to sense mysteries behind the sober facts of geography. But the map of the world is a picture of reality. At the beginning of 1943, the United Nations' growing strength is just as real as the failure of Haushofer's dream. The world is beginning to conquer the World Island.



MERCATOR IS NO MAP FOR GLOBAL WAR Together this map and the small insert map (lower left) show the entire world in two halves. The dividing line between the two hemispheres is plotted below with a red line on a Mercator map, illustrating how unrealistically the far northern latitudes are represented on a rectangular map. The entire polar regions cannot be shown, since on Mercator the poles are at infinity. Also note the relation of Asia to North America on each projection. Although essential in navigation and an ideal projection for the equatorial regions, Mercator is a dangerous map to use in studying global strategy.



World F-95 (1943) [Ard.]